THOUGHTS OF A POSTMAN

MANLY RITCH

THOUGHTS OF A POSTMAN

BY

MANLY RITCH

Second Edition

Published by
MANLY RITCH
Greenwich, Conn.
1923
All rights reserved

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

COPYRIGHT, 1923, 1924,
BY MANLY RITCH

Set up and printed. Published November, 1923.
Reprinted October, 1924.

FERRIS PRINTING COMPANY
NEW YORK CITY

PRELUDE

Remember when you criticise
  My literary task,
I left school when but ten years old;
  That's all I'll ever ask.
Now I don't call my book "Poems"—
  I wouldn't be so vain—
If it's poetry you'll know it;
  If not it will remain
The thoughts of a rhyming postman
  Who works hard ev'ry day,
And then at night sits down to write
  To keep sad thoughts away.

TO MY WIFE

To my dear wife these rhymes I dedicate,
For no man ever had a better mate;
Of kindly words and deeds there was no dearth,
In fact, I had ten times what I am worth!

So glad was I to call her "better-half,"
(This is no joke, and so no time to laugh.)
I worshipped her, and, it is my belief,
In wedding her I was a low-down thief.

And yet, she sang my praises to the sky—
Though worthy of a better man than I—
She said, "Hub tries to please with all his might."
Sweetheart! How could one help but treat her right?

And she is just as much my wife today
As e'er before. Why, "she is just away!"
I feel that she has gone to my new home
To have things ready for me when I come.

AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I've had my share of sorrow and I've shed some scalding
tears,
But God is good and so I now declare:
He has been my guide and helper for forty-seven years;
So I'll begin my rhyme-book with a prayer.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Prelude	iii
To My Wife	iv
An Acknowledgment	v
A Postman's Prayer	1
My Work	2
At Twilight	3
A Country Lane	3
A Short Wedding Trip	4
Temptation	4
Incapacitated	5
Alone	5
A Postman's Sonnet	6
Triolet of a Meerschaum Pipe	6
Now	7
Meadow Lane	7
A Song of Winter	8
The Postman's Trusty Ford	9
The Partner of My Fishing Trips	10
Reminiscence	12
Something I Shall Not Forget	13
In Memoriam—Mary Moody Ritch	14
In Putnam Cemetery	17
A Christmas Card	18
The Vicissitudes of Life	19
The Lunch Cart	20
Irving Hawthorne	21
On Daylight Saving	23
My Job Comes First	23
Thomas E. Hackett	24
The Friendly Path	27
A Model Husband	28
Try Again	29
A Fall Tonic	30

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Safety First	31
Hilltop Inn	32
To a Chipmunk	33
Bald Headed Eagle's Nest	34
The Alphabet	34
Historic Putnam Hill	35
Hope for the Best But Prepare for the Worst	36
A Home-Made Valentine to M. M. R.	37
Wife	37
Patches	38
Say It With Kindness	39
The Star of Bethlehem	40
Everyday Is Rubber Day Now	40
Is Your Money Safe?	41
Disarmament	42
Field and Stream	42
Words	44
Cobble Mansion	45
The Pessimist	46
Keep Your Hearts All Right	47
The Game of Life	48
The Final Trip	48
The King of Horses	50
Boyhood On the Farm	51
Air Castles	53
Murder for Mercy	54
Boyhood In Springtime	56
Old Year and New	57
A Rainy Night On the Farm	57
The Bible—Have You Seen It Lately?	59
A Lesson from a Tree	59
Sunday and Everyday	60
A Silent Exhortation	61
Immortality	62
An Eulogy	62
Styles—Past and Future	63
Just a Wave of the Hand	63
Identification	64
The Call of the Farm	65
Rafferty's Report	66
A Postman's Wish	67
"All Set" for the Postman's Ball	68

CONTENTS

	PAGE
A Restless Night	69
The Farmer With a Hoe	69
A Poet's Paradise	70
The Poet (?) Ponders	71
Thanksgiving Day on the Farm	72
Thanksgiving Day at a Boarding House	74
Equanimity	75
The Old Homestead	75
The Carnival	76
Albert June, Neighbor	78
An Apology	79
My Garden	79
To Rev. Oliver Huckel, D. D.	80
Easter in Springtime	81
Laboring on the Temple	81
The Best Room in the House	82
Sore Feet	83
Birthday Greeting's to L. W. L.	84
Dad's Trip With Santa Claus	85
How, Why and When	87
When Dad Goes to Work	88
The Postman's Christmas	89
The Mountain Stream	89
Thanksgiving	91
Reciprocity	92
Plain Livin'	93
The Bald Head Club of America	93
Alarming the Neighborhood	94
I'd Like to Imitate a Bird	95
An Amateur's Fish Story	97
Order of the Eastern Star	98
A Poet's Vacation	99
The Winner	99
The Deserted Homestead	100

THOUGHTS OF A POSTMAN

A POSTMAN'S PRAYER

O Lord, the church bells ring so sweet tonight!
What can I answer? Busy on my route,
Collecting mail, and yet, I feel 'tis right;
For mail there is no stop nor substitute!
Within the portals of that temple where
A soft light shines through leaded, colored glass
I cannot enter now, but yet, I dare
To worship Thee with rev'rence as I pass.

For I have read in Thine own precious Word
About the one sheep, lost, but later found;
And not one tired, sickly little bird
Will fall without Thy notice to the ground.
I thank Thee, Lord, that Thou hast given me
My work to do, and may I do it right!
For not one thing I do but Thou canst see
O Lord, my sins are many in Thy sight!

Forgive me, Lord; and send the strength I lack
To take Thy yoke upon me without fear;
Just as I do this heavy leathern sack;
And carry it with honor, year by year.

Help me to be as truthful as the clock *
That prints the time whene'er I come or go;
Make me, O Lord, as steadfast as that rock;
Calm as this night; clean as this pure, white snow,

And when the children meet me on my way,
Who hear my speech and watch my mood and tact,
Help me to live my life from day to day
That they may rightly learn to speak and act.
Teach me to love, and hope, and watch and pray;
And may I feel on my weak hand Thy grip,
To comfort and sustain me on my way
Till some day I shall end my Final Trip.

MY WORK

M y work another cannot do for me,
A nd this I know full well: it is but right
N ever to shirk, but do with all my might
L ight tasks or heavy, as the case may be.
Y es, I must work. Well, work and I agree.

R eady with pen for thoughts both sad and gay,
I 'll write them down; perhaps some future day
T he prize I hope to win may come to me.
C hanges have come to make me sad but I
H ave courage still to make another try.

,
P utting aside all thoughts of pleasure or
O f rest, I'll work away until I'm dead;
E ach little rhyme of mine may then be read;
T hat is my hope. Is it worth striving for?

* Automatic time recorder.

AT TWILIGHT

When sets the sun within the portals of the West,
Does twilight find that you have done your best
To finish all the work you have to do?
Or does it find that you are not half through?
Were you an idler all the morn, until the sun
Had measured off high noon, without a task begun?
Then later, when the sun went down to rest,
Did you begin, when idlers work the best?

The day is passing out to join days gone before,
And twilight creeps in silently once more;
Have you done one good deed? If not, the day is lost.
'Tis gone forever now and you must count the cost
Of resting when you should have been at work.
Have you accomplished much, or did you shirk?

A COUNTRY LANE

Oh, dear old country lane in Cognewog!
  How oft' I've wandered down thy pleasant way;
  And sat upon a bar-rail half the day,
Just listening to the croaking of a frog.
And very often in the pale moonlight
  When all was calm and peaceful on the farm,
  With my old sweetheart clinging to my arm,
Thou drew us to thee, country lane, at night.

But yet, one thing about thee, country lane,
  I did not like. And when we chanced to roam,
I thought of it Oh, time and time again:
  'Twas through thee that the cows were driven home.
Oft' when thy pleasant way we trod, I found,
I stepped on something softer than the ground.

A SHORT WEDDING TRIP

It was a grand day for a ride—
One of those perfect days in June—
Jack's motor fairly hummed a tune;
With him sat Flo, his pretty bride.
New York's streets simply seemed to glide
Beneath their wheels and soon they came
To meadows green—the same old game!
Love in the wooded countryside!

At "Tumble Inn" they had some tea,
And then a rambling walk they took
Down meadow-lane, and chanced to see
A gray crane stalking in the brook.
Flo cried: "Let's beat it for New York!
I'm frightened when I see a stork!

TEMPTATION

Temptation woos me from my work to-day;
I hear the mellow piping of a quail:
And my dog "Flush" looks up and wags his tail
As if he reads my thoughts and wished to say,
Forget your work! Come on, I'll lead the way
To fields where Nature came to paint anew
The countryside, and yes, this more I'll do:
I'll show you where to find some game to-day.

Oh, I should like to go!—but I must stay.
Come, "Flush," lie down. Oh, you must not beguile
Me so. Old boy, I cannot steal away.
But wait—it may be but a little while—
Although the hunting bee is in my bonnet
I shall not leave until I write—this sonnet!

INCAPACITATED

Here I am lying flat in bed,
I've got to stay here for a while;
My feet won't go another mile,
But, thank God, I can use my head!
My route—oh, I don't think of it,
Another chap takes care of that
While I lie here. I may get fat!
I need it, too, a little bit.

To have sore feet is not so tough
If I'm not grunting all the while;
Christian Science!—that's the stuff!
So I'll just lie right here and smile.
In case a friend should call on me
He'll find me decent company.

ALONE

You know not what it means to be alone,
You people who have never "loved and lost";
Nor can you comprehend the dreadful cost
Of that last kiss upon a brow like stone.

Your loved one may have gone somewhere you've known
For years, and taken all the family, too;
Your house seemed lonely, did it not, to you?
You know not what it means to be alone!

Perhaps, some day you'll leave a cold, gray stone,
Go to your home, walk in and shut the door;
You'll know then what it means to be alone!
Your loved one gone, yes, gone forever more.
Oh, husband, wife, live with each other right!
Before Death comes and all is black as night.

A POSTMAN'S SONNET

If you would speed your postman on his way,
(You'd help yourself by giving him a hand)
Just sprinkle on those icy steps some sand;
He'd like to make another trip today.
But if he can't—ah well, 'tis not his fault;
No doubt he's done the very best he could.
My friend, those icy steps of yours you should
Have sprinkled with a little sand or salt.

It's up to you to help your postman out
By making safe your steps along his way;
If he must slip and slide there is no doubt
You'll have to do with but one mail a day.
A little sand or salt—not much to ask;
Just think—he might fall down and break his flask!

TRIOLET ON A MEERSCHAUM PIPE

Give me a good old meerschaum pipe
When day is done and I'm at rest;

When it is colored rich and ripe,
Give me a good old meerschaum pipe!

A pipe, a book, an open fire—
Which do you think I like the best?
Give me a good old meerschaum pipe!
When day is done and I'm at rest.

NOW

Now is the time and this is the place,
Tomorrow means nothing to me;
Whatever may come I shall meet face to face,
Now is the time and this is the place.
I shall give my best efforts to work of today—
Tomorrow I may never see—
Now is the time and this is the place,
Tomorrow means nothing to me.

MEADOW LANE

You may rave about the city
And the charms of "Old Broadway,"
Where countless thousands gather
To turn night into day;
"The Great White Way" to some may be
A very pleasant treat,
But give me a place like Meadow Lane
Where the grass grows in the street.

Some city folk don't feel at home
Unless they're in a crowd,

And lonesome get unless they hear
A racket, long and loud;
But I prefer the country
With its birds and flowers sweet,
And a quiet stroll down Meadow Lane
Where the grass grows in the street.

Some citizens, though country-born,
Elect to spend their lives
Cooped up in dinkey little flats
Like bees packed in their hives;
But I'll stay in the country
'Till "Father Time" I meet,
And he'll find me down in Meadow Lane
Where the grass grows in the street.

A SONG OF WINTER

Let others sing of Springtime
When all the outer-air
Is filled (they say) with gladness
And cheer beyond compare;
Of rippling rills and pleasant dells,
Birds, flowers and blue skies;
My song is of the Winter
And how I like to rise.

Oh, there's nothing I like better,
When the air is stinging cold
And there is ice and snow enough
To make most people scold,

Than to wake at break of dawning,
Think of these things and then—
To realize it's Sunday
And go to sleep again.

THE POSTMAN'S TRUSTY FORD

I've carried mail for many years,
And always drove a horse
Till "The Universal Car" came out;
Then I purchased one, of course.

At first I felt real timid
When I drove my car of tin;
I had a dreadful horror
That I'd some day be towed in.

Though many years I've used that car,
Home I've not had to walk;
And when I feed it up on gas
The old wheels fairly talk.

Once when I had it opened up
'Till great speed it acquired,
'Twas then the hubs spoke to the rims
And asked if they were tired.

I once forgot to fill the tank,
And then it came to pass,
When I got 'way out on my route
I ran clean out of gas.

So anxious was that little Ford
To serve this Mighty Nation,

It ran all day without a stop,
Just on its reputation.

When I have served a lifelong term,
And gone to my reward,
Shall I leave to my successor
My trusty little Ford?

I ask you now to promise,
With all sincerity,
That you'll take my little Ford car
And bury it with me.

Some angels may prefer nice wings,
When transformed from mere man,
But oh, just let me fly around
In my little old "tin can"!

THE PARTNER OF MY FISHING TRIPS

There's a spot Southeast of Benedict's place
Out on Long Island Sound,
I've fished there many an Autumn day
When the mackerel came around.
The partner of my fishing trips
Was Jim Lyon, old, but game;
He could sit and fish the whole day long
Without feeling stiff or lame.

I can see Jim now at the head of the creek—
He would sit on the bridge and wait
While I went down with my hip-boots on
And caught a pail of bait.

Then Jim would take the largest ones
And grind them up for "chum,"
Pour in some bunker-oil and say,
"Ah, that'll make 'em come!"

When we got out to our fishing grounds
I'd take an old tin cup,
Throw out some "chum" to "make 'em come"
And the mackers did come up!
Then we'd sit there and haul 'em in;
Though we had lots of "grub"
We wouldn't stop to take a bite
'Till we'd filled a butter-tub.

Then with our hands all "gooied up"
We could eat! now you just bet!
Then I'd light my pipe, but Jim preferred
To roll a cigarette.
There we sat and smoked, and watched the gulls
Swoop down and then fly high:
We saw the yachts at anchor
And the night-boats going by.

Just as the sun was setting
In the portals of the West
We'd always say that that one day
Of all days was the best.
Then on the following morning—
And as long as the fish would run—
We'd go out Southeast of Benedict's place
To have what I call fun!

Jim has gone over the river,
But I just can't help but feel

That he's sitting on the other side
With a pole, hook, line and reel.
I've heard of "Happy Hunting Grounds,"
But if I could have my wish,
'Twould be Heaven just to be with Jim
And fish, and fish, and fish!

REMINISCENCE

Old friend, I see you in my mind
As you sat across the table.
Would I live those good days o'er again?
You just bet, if I were able!
'Twas long before the sun arose
The eastern hills adorning
That we drank our steaming coffee
So early in the morning.

No sooner was the coffee made
Than I heard upon the stair
That old familiar foot-step;
'Twas you, Jim, coming there.
You'd always say "Good mornin' pard!"
In a voice a little gruff,
And you'd ask the same old question:
"Has the coffee perked enough?"

Then in the pocket of your bath-robe
For "the makin's" you would feel;
And you'd smoke and s-s-sip your coffee,
'Twas like music with my meal!
When my breakfast I had finished
And our good byes we had said,

Then I'd go whistling on my route
And you'd go back to bed.

Those good old days have passed and gone
For 'twas the Master's will,
But thank the Lord for this one thing:
The mem'ry lingers still!
Though you've packed your goods and rolled your tent
In another land to pitch,
With your coffee in the morning
Think of your old friend,

MANLY RITCH.

SOMETHING I SHALL NOT FORGET

When I was a boy with a coat of tan
I used to take an old tin can
To pick berries in the pasture-lot,
And many a scratch on the bare legs I got.

Then I'd sell my berries in the town;
I'd buy some shoes and a brand new "crown";
My daddy couldn't buy my "lids"
He had too many other kids.

Now I've hats galore, and shoes for my feet,
And I buy "The News" from the boys on the street;
I was once a boy without any shoes,
So I don't subscribe for The Daily News.

IN MEMORIAM

Mary Moody Ritch

Mary, were I a Tennyson, a Poe or Thomas Gray,
I could not write my feelings, there is something that will stay
Deep-rooted here within my breast,
A something fond and true,
It will stay 'till I am laid at rest,
It's the memory, dear, of you.

Now that you're gone, oh, do not think that I will soon forget!
A hundred times a day I think of the time when first we met;
I had just been appointed,
Yet I felt weak and small,
And I prayed to Christ annointed
As I drove to "Homestead Hall."

I sorted mail there on the desk and then when I was through,
I glanced around, and on the stair there, dear, I first saw you.
Now, many, many times each day
My mind is living o'er
Those times I called in "suit of gray"
When you came to the door.

Time passed, days lengthened into weeks, and, as our friendship grew
I did not dare to hope for that which you already knew;

Until you spoke those precious words
That night I bent above you,
'Twas like the singing of the birds,
I heard you say "I love you."

Oh, what a happy man was I! and yet could it be true
That I, a gawk from Caughnewaugh,* had won the love of you!
How did you come to love me
Enough to share my name?
I could not comprehend, but, "Gee!"
I thought, "I'm game!"

And so, returning home that night I talked with God of you
And prayed that He might make me a better man all through;
Then I tried to do my duty
But yet, I think it's true—
That I was a thorn, my beauty,
Beside a rose like you.

But we became engaged, my dear, and built our little home;
There's not a thing that's in it, from the cellar to the dome,
But what I love it; I love it!
Did you not help me, dear?
I would not choose above it;
"Our Home!" and I'll stay here!

Denied the happiness of health which other people had,
For years you suffered, dearest, yet I seldom found you sad.

*Indian name, pronounced Cog-ne-wog.

Each day the pain grew more and more,
Oh, the fortitude you had!
Always I see that gnawing sore,
O God! will it drive me mad!

No, I must try to calm myself, for I seem to hear you say:
"Dearest, don't grieve, be happy, we shall meet again some day."
Some day, ah yes, but yet apart,
It seems a long, long trail,
To live here with a broken heart
And carry out the mail.

Ah, well do I remember, 'twas before our wedding day,
You said: "Dearest, you have worked so hard, I'll pay you back some way."
It was a task and I shed tears,
But you made our house a Home;
You were an angel many years
Before God bid you "Come!"

You were my guiding star, my dear, your love so freely given,
Is now a beacon light, which shines to guide me on to heaven.
You have been my inspiration,
All I've done or hope to do,
I can say with adoration,
I owe it, love, to you.

With God's help, when my toil is o'er and my race on earth is run;
When I have made my final trip and all is said and done;

I hope I shall have lived my life
As He would have me do,
And that I may be fit, my wife,
To come and be with you.

IN PUTNAM CEMETERY

I leave behind the noisy town
Where there is much that's low and mean,
And wander forth to sit me down
Where all is pure, and sweet, and clean.

Above the sky is clear and blue:
White clouds sail gently overhead;
The flowers bloom; the birds sing, too,
In this the City of the Dead.

Why come I to this lonely spot?
To view what Nature hath to give?
I come because I've not forgot!
And I'll continue while I live

To visit here each seventh day,
It is my wish; it is but just
That I should weekly homage pay
To one who mingles with the dust.

But is she really lying here
Within her silent, narrow tomb?
Or is she in a higher sphere?
Oh, lovely flower! culled in bloom.

I will not say that she is dead!
Nor that I'll see her never more;

But I will keep this thought instead—
She's more alive than e'er before!

And yet, 'tis hard, that will of His;
To see the one I loved depart,
And know not where she really is,
Save in the longing of my heart.

Although the future may be dim,
Her God is mine; in Him I'll trust!
Nor will I cease to worship Him
'Till I, too, mingle with the dust.

A CHRISTMAS CARD

I send this card of greeting, not
Because it's customary:
It is that I have not forgot
Your kindness, just to Mary.

But you are kind to others, too,
And tho my wife's not here
I know what she would have me do:
Send you a card each year.

And so the rhyme I send this year
Is written by a rover,*
It's how to have real Christmas cheer;
Read—and think it over.

'Tis not the things we get each year
That makes worth-while the game;
It's how to give real Christmas cheer
And do it in His name.

*Postman.

THE VICISSITUDES OF LIFE

Grief-stricken on a rocky bed,
Where angry billows pound the shore,
Lay one whose rhymes had not been read
And yet, his Muse demanded more.

"I have no subject, Muse," he said.
His Muse replied, "Behold, the sea!"
But sight was veiled; his rocky bed
Was met with tears of memory.

He cried: "How could Death treat me so?—
To take my wife and yet not give
Us one short, happy year to go?
Why, we had just begun to live!

"How hard I struggled in life's game
To win a home where she and I
Might live in peace and fan Love's flame
A few short years ere we should die.

"I won the prize, and now, behold,
A house, well built, with Beauty decked;
As sad a tale as e'er was told:
There stands a house, the home is wrecked."

O, such is life! we barely sight
The prize we claim with joy and mirth,
When suddenly there comes a blight—
Death rudely brings us back to earth.

Is it worth while to live at all—
So soon our handicap is run?
I answer, yes!—if with His call
We hear just these two words, "Well done!"

Life's changes coming thick and fast
  Are but our soul's sure means of growth.
Good change or bad, we win at last,
  Have we but made the best of both.

THE LUNCH CART

There's a lunch cart down at the end of the street
  Where I go every morn;
It's an interesting place to go—
  That's as sure as you were born.
The owner isn't a foreign chef;
  He can beat them at the game,
For he's a down-East Yankee cook.
  "Len" Mingo is his name.

And the men who gather in that place
  Are of forty-seven kind:
A more cosmopolitan gathering
  It would be hard to find.
There are English, Irish, Dutch and Swedes,
  And a Negro dubbed "black Joe".
There's a Frenchman—a real artist—
  And a poet (if I say so.)

There's the "movie man." (I don't mean "films,"
  He's not that sort of gent.)
He's the man who comes to move you out
  If you fail to pay your rent.
Tom Irwin, the tomb-stone man, is there,
  And he calls out loud and brave:
"You can't move from me, my laddies,
  I'll follow you to the grave."

Oh, it's nice to be there when the seats are filled,
Why, it's just like a big love-feast!
For each man there is a friend of mine,
From the greatest to the least.
And when "black Joe" says, "Mornin', gents,"
As he takes a seat near by,
I prove to him that he can be
No more of a "gent" than I.

And I've told my pals that no man there
Is a better man than he,
Unless, by good behaviour,
He proves himself to be.
For 'tis not the way you look, I said,
Nor how you dress each day,
But it's how you choose to live and act,
And what you do and say.

These "early birds" all have warm hearts
And I'm glad to be one of the crowd;
I'm proud to be hailed as "one of the bunch"
And I'm saying it right out loud!
Though future years may take me far,
Far away from the old lunch cart,
You may go there early any morn
And there you will find my heart.

IRVING HAWTHORNE

When the first streak of daylight was breaking
To herald the dawn of the day;
When folks who must labor were waking
To go out and work for their pay;

Though most folks I knew were still sleeping,
I could see as I went on my way
A man in the haze fairly leaping:
'Twas Hawthorne in "Uncle Sam's" gray.

A great worker was friend Irving Hawthorne:
Off to work at the break of day:
Hustling down to the office
In his quick, energetic way.
It mattered not what the weather,
Sometimes hot, sometimes cold, snow or hail;
He always remembered his duty,
To promptly deliver the mail.

He was up with the birds in the morning—
And before when the weather was wet;
He needed no clock to give warning,
He was right on the job, you can bet!
Now when we look back o'er the records,
Though strange, yet it surely appears;
He was never once late in reporting
In all of those twenty-one years.

Of course we shall miss our co-worker,
He was faithful, kind-hearted and true:
He was full to the brim with good nature,
A real Christian man, through and through.
Though he's gone, he has left an example
Of honesty, courage and vim:
In our hearts we will cherish his mem'ry
And try to exemplify him.

ON DAYLIGHT SAVING

When God made everything, 'tis said, "He stood
And looked upon His work and called it good."
And yet, He knew that some day puny man
Would try to meddle with His perfect plan.
This has been done—They've balled things up for fair
With "daylight saving"—next 'twill be the air
They take, and then, as sure as death,
They'll try to slap a mortgage on our breath.

If those who favor "daylight saving," 'rose
At 5 o'clock the year around Lord knows
They wouldn't want the "daylight saving" plan
No more than I, I'll tell you that, my man!
I could write more, but why prolong the rhyme
And waste good ink on "daylight saving" time?
Congress repealed that law some years ago.
(Look up the federal law—you'll find it so.)

Congress fixed Standard Time—that law is made.
However sad to state, 'tis not obeyed.
Shall we obey our laws when Congress speaks?
Are we Americans—or "Bolsheviks"?

MY JOB COMES FIRST

I'm working and I'm glad to be
  In just such a place as I am now;
Nothing on earth agrees with me
  Like honest toil and a sweaty brow.

The sun is bright—a perfect day
  For pulverizing the upturned sod;

And what a place this is to pray!
Out here in the open fields with God.

I hold no prayer-book in my hands—
The handle of a hoe I'm gripping—
But God is here and understands;
He reads my thoughts while weeds I'm clipping.

I'm thankful He has given me
Such a useful task here on this earth,
And I'll do my job thought it may be
Just a-hoein' corn for all I'm worth.

Of course, I like a little fun!
Emphatically, I'll say I do!
But I'll not quit my work and run
'Till I've finished all I have to do.

My job completed, then I quite
Enjoy a rest or to "toot my horn,"
But if I knew I'd die tonight,
I'd just keep a-hoein' out this corn.

THOMAS E. HACKETT

We had a "hot time" Friday night—
Branch seven-fifty-nine—
In honor of Tom Hackett
Who'd decided to resign.

When Hackett shed his bag and key,
It didn't seem quite fair,
No one took him by the hand,
In fact no one was there.

It seemed to get the writer's goat,
So he wrote the following rhyme
And hung it in the "swing room"
To bring the boys to time.

"Tom Hackett, faithful postman,
Has served for many years,
The Rockefellers, Bakers,
Posts and other peers.

"Hobnobbing with those millionaires
Has never turned his head;
He's the same old "Tom" we always knew,
We admire the life he's led.

"Kind and unassuming,
Yet full of grit and sand,
And always ready when you're down
To extend a helping hand.

"And now he's parted from us,
On the farm to spend his days.
Shall we let this good man go away
Without a word of praise?

"What say you, fellow workers,
Shall we call on him some night?
Just to show we've not forgotten
And that our hearts are right.

"Let's take him something that he'd like!
How about an easy chair?
Now that he has retired
It would just suit this affair.

"Come now, boys, get together,
Say what you'd like to do;
Shall we go up and call on Tom
And take him something, too?"

So we boys all got together
And purchased an easy chair,
The kind that when you sit in it
You feel you're floating in the air.

We took lots of things to eat and drink
And went to call on Hackett ;
The boys won't soon forget that night,
We had a bully racket!

When we had dined a-plenty
(Thanks to each member's wife)
Hackett stood up and said, "Well boys,
'Tis a green spot in my life.

"And when I sit in your easy chair,
Now that I've quit the works,
I'll say 'Thank God for time I spent
With you, carriers and clerks.' "

Now friends, if your co-worker
Has decided to retire,
Just give the man a "send off"
That will set his heart on fire.

Then when it comes your time to quit,
They'll hear you say (I hope),
"That gink sure gave us good advice
When he handed out that dope."

THE FRIENDLY PATH

Oh, narrow pathway! how I love
To use it every day!
It leads not to the hill above,
Nor down the valley way.

It's just a path trod in the green,
Straight as a builder's line;
Extending all the way between
My neighbor's house and mine.

Emblem of friendship, there it lies
With neither stile nor gate;
It's like a cord of love that ties
Friends who reciprocate.

If my neighbor wants assistance
I go with foot-steps fleet;
If my trouble needs resistance
He's right there with both feet!

All the tradesmen and the postman
Use that convenient pass;
I know they find it better than
A sign, "Keep Off the Grass!"

So that pathway use, well knowing,
You who may cross my lawn,
That the grass will still be growing
When we are dead and gone.

A MODEL HUSBAND

Jim's mother died when he was young,
And though much pains it took,
Along with other useful stunts
He learned to be a cook.

When he grew up to be a man
And took a little wife,
He hadn't told her that he'd cooked
A thing in all his life.

So when the old alarm buzzed off
His wife sprang to the floor.
"That's fine!" Jim praised, "I'll tell you now:
You may sleep two hours more."

Then he started in to show her
How the little trick was done.
(To cook breakfast in the morning
Was for Jim a little fun.)

He fried some bacon, crisp; and eggs
With the sunny side turned up;
And the coffee that he made was just
Like amber in the cup.

He had grapefruit, cereal, toast and jam;
Then he called his wife to look,
Saying: "You've a model husband
And his middle name is cook.

"I didn't tell you this before,
I thought I'd wait and see

How you would act at 5 a. m.
And in what mood you'd be.

"But now that I've seen you're willing
To rise at break of day,
I'll tell you now, my little wife,
Go back and 'hit the hay.' "

TRY AGAIN

Are you sick of the grind?
Have you made up your mind
To quit the whole thing where it stands?
Ah, don't try to shirk,
But just start to work
And tackle your job with both hands.

Is your job an excuse
To exclaim "what's the use?"
Are you just about ready to quit?
That's the time to begin
To buck up and wade in!
You'll win if you've got enough grit.

Does it seem a tough game
To see others win fame
While you who have tried are left out?
Just keep plugging away,
For it may be to-day
That you'll win with a whoop in life's bout!

Envoi

Do you think that advice
Is cheap at half price?
That at trouble I've not had my fling?
I've been left in a hole;
I've been knocked for a goal;
Though disfigured, I'm still in the ring.

A FALL TONIC

Have you ever seen anything nicer
Than the bright October sun?
Do you know of a thing you like better
Than to take your dog and gun
Out to your friend's old farmhouse,
Then follow up the trail
Of old "Sport" hunting, true to form,
The woodcock, partridge or quail?

When Nature in splendid robes is dressed
On a day that is balmy and fair;
When Sport's scent is keen and his body lean,
And you followed him here and there;
O, you won't need any quail on toast!
Though your food may be the worst;
You'll be primed to eat 'most anything
That wouldn't bite you first.

Returning then to the farmhouse
You sit down to a meal;
O, that wonderful sensation!
How hungry you will feel!

You'll do the gastronomic feat
  Like a hog fed up on corn,
For you'll feel the pangs of hunger,
  That's as sure as you were born!

Then when you leave the table
  Your pipe will come in right;
Just fill it up and pack it down
  With good old "Sport's Delight";
You'll feel Nature's Tonic working,
  And I'll tell you, friend, it pays
To tramp for miles with your dog and gun
  On bright October days.

SAFETY FIRST

Safety first! there's your slogan;
  Just stick to it, too,
And give others the road
  If they want to sail through.
When you drive have a care
  And listen, my friend,
Don't step on the gas
  When you're rounding the bend.

Safety first! that's my text;
  Let the message soak in,
Keep it ever in mind
  When you're out for a spin,
Put your thumb on the button
  A loud warning send
And don't step on the gas
  When you're rounding the bend.

Safety first! that's the word;
In your mind let it steep;
Don't give her the gas
Just to see the car leap;
Don't ogle so much
That pretty girl friend,
Keep your eyes on the road
When you're rounding the bend.

HILLTOP INN

Over the hills and far away
I drive "The Postman's Trusty Ford";
And I am bound this holiday
To join that happy, care-free horde,

Who meet at Hilltop Inn to-day
Where "air is pure and victuals good";
You couldn't scare this "bird" away
With a big, long, knotty stick of wood.

Old "Chicken Hill," I've climbed your grade!
Ah, now I view famed Hilltop Inn!
And well I know I'll be repaid
For coming in my car of tin.

Have you ever dined at Hilltop Inn?
Chicken? I'll say there is, galore!
But yet, no doubt you may have been
Where you've heard that foul name before.

But the broilers here at Hilltop Inn,
Indeed, they're something else again;

They're not all neck, and wings and skin,
  Nor the carcass of a settin' hen.

But they're tender, juicy, rich and rare!
  I can't take time to wipe my chin!
But I'm so happy I don't care
  While dining here at Hilltop Inn.

TO A CHIPMUNK

O little striped chipmunk,
  Hurrying back and forth the whole day through;
What forethought, perseverance, thrift and spunk
  I see in you!

Out from our granary
  You come and scamper to the old stone-wall;
Storing up food for Winter. Seems to me
  You know it's Fall.

I, in the swinging chair
  Beneath the shady boughs of this old oak,
Have learned a lesson—more than passing fair—
  As though you spoke.

Is there one fault in you—
  So busy with your task since early morn?
I'll tell you, little chipmunk, what you do:
  You take our corn!

And yet, the lesson taught
  Entitles you to take some grain away.
God did not make you, little friend, for naught.
  Work on, I say!

BALD-HEADED EAGLE'S NEST

Oh, what a place to dream and rest!
My own Bald-Headed Eagle's Nest!
It's just a mere cottage, but it looms
Big in my mind, for its six small rooms
Have rung with laughter; they've been wet with tears
My "Home, Sweet Home," for sixteen years!

It's not how large, nor how high the dome
That makes the place where you dwell a home;
But it's how you live, and what you're at
That makes the place where you hang your hat
A domicile where loved ones yearn,
When you're away, for your return.

Just a tiny house on a little lot,
But if it's a Home it's a treasured spot!
If it's neat and clean and is built secure
To keep within all that's good and pure;
If it's furnished (never mind the comb),
It's my idea of a bald-head's home.

THE ALPHABET

A gawky boy was "'Zekiel Pidge,"
B orn 'way back on Hunting Ridge;
C ountrified and lacking "class,"
"D ummy" they called him, "green as grass."
E very time he went to town
F olks would call him "country clown."
G ot him vexed to be called "fool,"
H ad to leave at ten his school.

"I 'll larn though," said 'Zeke, "by Joe!
J est watchin' them as really know."
K ept his eyes and ears alert;
L earned that knowledge didn't hurt
M ost every night he sat up late
N osing into volumes great.
O ft his "pap" would wake and say,
"P ut that book up right away!
Q uick about it, too, my lad!
R ight away now, or, by dad,
S ee if I don't make you drop it!
T ough, but I must make you stop it."
U sed to turn night into day,
V ery studious, I'll say;
W orked all day and read at night.
'X celsior? Well no, not quite.
Y ou can judge how high you'd get.
'Z eke can write the alphabet!

HISTORIC PUTNAM HILL

"Put's Hill," O, thou of everlasting fame!
Where General Putnam's ride was far from tame,
Your hundred steps down which his leap he made
Were later changed into one long, steep grade.

But what is this which now our eyes behold?
A gang of workmen with their shirt-sleeves rolled,
They toil and sweat, old mammoth trees uproot,
And pile huge boulders down there at your foot.

Soon truckmen need not scotch their heavy load,
Then drive off leaving rocks there in the road,

To make some tourist quake with dreadful fear,
And throw him out, perhaps, upon his ear.

This change they're making now, we're glad to state,
Is something that we'll all appreciate,
Your base filled in, your grading done to please,
Old Putnam Hill we'll climb you then with ease.

When we have climbed your grade we'll shut off power
And throttle down to fifteen miles an hour,
To let our eyes feast on that wondrous view:
Those grand old sights on Putnam Avenue!—

Christ Church and Parish house which we all love;
The soldier's monument just on the knoll above;
The Congregational Church there on the right,
The setting sun shines on its spire, bright.

Down at its foot The City of the Dead,
The sky above a mass of gold and red;
The clinging ivy climbing high, and higher,
Its steeple towering in a sea of fire!

Think you that one could find a nicer spot?
You may say, yes, but really, I think not.
If heaven's like this, then I'll not be afraid
Unless I find I'm going all down grade.

HOPE FOR THE BEST BUT PREPARE FOR THE WORST

You never know what's coming
So all your forces rally,
Sometimes you're on the mountain,
Then way down in the valley.

Not one person can foretell
The vicissitudes of life,
Now it's a round of pleasure,
Then it's worry, work and strife.

So start your efforts with a will,
A merry tune keep humming,
But prepare for an emergency
For you never know what's coming.

A HOME-MADE VALENTINE

To M. M. R.

For sixteen years you've been my valentine
And oh, how swiftly Time has passed away!
It's all because you held this hand of mine
And made me love you more and more each day.

'Tis said that Time hath wings, and so it seems
To lives like ours where loving hearts beat true;
Thoughts, too, have wings, awake or in my dreams
My thoughts are always flying, dear, to you.

Some folk, like thorns which by the wayside grow,
Reach out and tear our hearts if we go near,
But you are like a flower and I know
You grow more precious each succeeding year.

WIFE

For many years in prose and rhyme
You've read the name of Mother;
It's a name most everybody loves,
And yet, there is another

(I'm thinking of someone I took
For better or for worse):
Wife is the name I've chosen
As the subject of my verse.

A Mother's task to train a boy
In the way that he should go
Is as easy job: "Just bend a twig
And so the tree will grow."
But to make a man a real man—
Say friend, just let me ask:
Is that a Mother's job? Ah, no.
That is a good wife's task.

There are many kind of mothers,
Some good and others bad;
And there are many kind of wives,
But that is not so sad:
Though man can not choose his mother
He does select his wife,
And if she's not she ought to be
The dearest thing in life.

PATCHES

When you see a man wearing a patch on his clothes,
Don't laugh; it's a rude thing to do.
The patch may be worn by a real man! Who knows?
He may be a model for you.

If the patch that he wears is well-fitted and neat,
If the stitches are small and trim;
It's a foregone conclusion his homelife is sweet,
No need to have pity for him.

And then, did you see a man wearing a patch
That looked rather crude to your eye?
Perhaps he had spent the last cent he could scratch
To comfort a wife doomed to die;

And after, he'd watched by the side of her bed
'Till she'd left him alone and sad,
It may have been then, with eyes dim and red,
That he sewed on that patch which looked bad.

So when you see patches, large, small, bad or good,
Don't make it a joking affair;
If you can't see a patch in the manner you should
Make believe there isn't one there.

SAY IT WITH KINDNESS

If you can speak a kindly word
To help a sad face smile,
Just say it, for you never know
How long or short a while
You may be privileged to stay
With those whom you should love;
Today you may be called to go
Below or up above.

Nor do you know which course you'll take,
But from all that I have heard,
It will never harm your future
To speak a kindly word.
And when the toil of life is o'er
And all is said and done,

Your kindly words will live and spread
A glory like the sun.

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM

At Christmas times we see on sale,
For about two weeks or more,
All kinds of wreaths both large and small,
Oh, there are wreaths galore!

Why did the wise men travel East?
What think you guided them?
Was it a wreath around the moon—
Or the Star of Bethlehem?

I may be a bit peculiar,
And yet, I'd like to state
That instead of a wreath a star
Would be more appropriate.

And so, when Christmas comes again
I hope that I shall see
On sale somewhere on Market Street
At least, one star for me.

EVERYDAY IS RUBBER DAY NOW

I wish the weatherman would take
This awful snow and slush away;
I'm sick of it. Why, gracious sake!
I've stood it now for many a day.

First comes a heavy fall of snow—
  Next day in mud I'm mired;
It's rubbers everywhere I go;
  Great Scott! I'm rubber-tired.

IS YOUR MONEY SAFE?

If, when you have to travel on the train,
  You feel that you are being jostled hard,
Then have a care! It's that old trick again:
  Pickpockets are at work; be on your guard.

A man who stands in front will block your way,
  And there is such a jam! I'll say there is.
The crowd behind push extra hard that day (?)
  'Tis not the crowd—it's just two pals of his.

The man in front will look you in the eye
  And smile as if he thought it quite a joke;
And so it is, for when that bird gets by
  You'll find your "roll" is gone and you are broke.

So when you have to travel in a crowd
  Take only what you think you'll need to spend;
And here's a rule—I'm saying it out loud—
  Scatter it in different pockets, friend.

Oh, I've been "trimmed" and so I ought to know;
  And yet, I'm mighty glad they got no more:
For bank accounts—I like to see them grow—
  I salted sixty "bucks" the day before!

DISARMAMENT

O when will cruel warfare cease
And nations live in blissful peace,
Extending hands across the sea
As though in one fraternity;
No race exalted, none oppressed,
But each one glad to help the rest?

When nations all learn to abhor
The weapons, cause and cost of war;
When all men meet upon the level
And fight with no one but the devil;
When each one thinks to look above
And learns this lesson: "God is Love."

FIELD AND STREAM

Such pleasant words are Field and Stream!
  Do they ever beckon you
When you're busy as a beaver
  With work you have to do?
Don't let pleasure stop your work.
  What though you can't enjoy
The happiness of Field and Stream
  As when you were a boy?

At night when you have finished work,
  Then by the open fire,
With feet stretched out to its red blaze,
  I'm sure you'll never tire
Thinking of those pleasant days
  With rod, gun and hunting-knife,

You hunted, trapped or fished the streams
  Having the time o' your life.

Have I been there? Why yes, of course:
  Can of worms and crooked pole,
And mossy bank where the spring ran down
  To meet the swimming hole.
How plain I now see in my mind
  The big tree by the brook
Behind which I hid from the hungry trout
  "Till I'd time to bait my hook.

Trapping the muskrat, mink and skunk,
  Each day on my route I went.
It didn't pay so well those days
  (Though I always had a scent)
But boys to-day, I think they smile—
  With the price of skins so high—
Thinking of girls these latter days
  Wearing their furs in July.

Hunting! Ah, that was royal sport!
  I liked it best of all;
Tramping the fields and wooded glen
  When the leaves began to fall.
And there was satisfaction, too,
  Not that I liked to kill—
But we had meat enough to eat
  And dodged the butcher's bill.

Those days have passed, but mem'ry lasts
  And thank God for it, too:
It's a pleasant recollection
  When I've nothing else to do;

Just to sit by the open fire
In my old wing rocking chair
And dream of fields and winding streams
And wish that I were there.

WORDS

(Suggestion from a Sermon by Rev. Oliver Huckel, D.D.)

Words! what mighty things they are!
Do you think when e'er you meet
Of the good your words may do,
Or the harm if indiscreet?

These are words you've often heard:
"Don't breathe this to a soul."
Then idle gossip follows
Putting someone in a hole.

"Now just keep this to yourself";
Those are other words you hear.
When you listen to such talk
"Let it out the other ear."

"They say" are the shortest words
But most cruel of them all;
"They say" injures characters
But don't you be so small.

When of the absent you speak
Imagine, if you can,
That your hand is on the shoulder
Of that woman or that man.

And now I think it fitting
  Before my song is sung
To simply add to this rhyme
  The story of a tongue:

A maid was sent to market
  For the best thing she could buy;
She soon returned in triumph
  Holding a tongue on high.

Again she was sent to market
  For the worst thing she could find;
This time she brought—another tongue!
  But an inferior kind.

Now this story of a tongue
  Is a parable for you:
You can make yours good or bad
  By the use you put it to.

COBBLE MANSION

There's a house called "Cobble Mansion"
  In the town of Fultonville,
Where I spent a grand vacation
  And I'm thinking of it still;
I'd get up at five each morning
  And, as the bright sun rose
Gaze up that quiet valley
  Where the Mohawk River flows.

That deep, wide stream glides onward
  Like a sheet of shining gold;

No grander nor more glorious sight
  Could ever eyes behold;
Unless it be the Valley Road,
  Like a silver thread it grows
As it winds off in the valley
  Where the Mohawk River flows.

Some folks prefer the city
  Where filth is gathered up
And newsboys shout and yell
  Until their lungs are lathered up;
But give me quiet Fultonville,
  At "Cobble Mansion" to repose,
In that pretty, peaceful valley
  Where the Mohawk River flows.

THE PESSIMIST

The pessimist is always there,
To spread deep gloom and black despair
On propositions you'd put through,
Or anything you try to do.

If you decide that you have got
To do a thing, no matter what,
The pessimist will, if he can,
Dash ice-cold water on your plan.

Don't let the hoodoo get your goat,
But jump right up, pull off your coat,
And with your conscience for your guide.
Work 'till you've lathered up your hide.

What though you make a slight mistake?
'Tis thus you learn success to make;
He who has made not one mistake,
Was never known a thing to make.

So start your efforts with a will,
And if the fiend pursues you still,
Cheer up! and show the pessimist
A smile that he cannot resist.

KEEP YOUR HEARTS ALL RIGHT

Although the skies like lead appear
  And all things seem in tune
To drag you from your cheerful mood
  'Way down to deepest gloom,
'Twill take far more than lowery days;
  Or a dark and starless night,
To change the smile upon your face
  If you keep your heart all right.

If you feel your courage slipping
  And you're laid upon the shelf,
I'll tell you what's the matter,
  You think too much about yourself.
Go scatter seeds of kindness;
  Help the fallen in their plight;
You can spread a lot of sunshine
  If you keep your heart all right.

When trouble knocks upon your door,
  Don't hide yourself from view;

And yet—don't look for trouble
'Till trouble troubles you.
But if it grabs you by the neck
Put up a good stiff fight;
Stick out your chin and wade right in,
But keep your heart all right.

THE GAME OF LIFE

Life is like a game of cards,
You shuffle, cut and deal;
And all must play, there's no excuse
No matter how you feel.

Then deal without fear or favor
As you play the game of life
And never cut with unkind words
Nor shuffle in unfair strife.

Just squarely play the game of life,
You woman or you man,
Just look the whole world in the face
And do the best you can;

Then as you play the game of life
All others will believe
That you'll not take advantage
With the ace poked up your sleeve.

THE FINAL TRIP

The door bell rang one morning
And when Jane went to the door,

She met a postman with the mail
Whom she'd not seen before.

Then on the following morning
When she went to take the mail,
She asked, "where's our old postman,
Is he ill that he should fail?"

The substitute then told her
How just two days before
"Old Bill" had rung his end key,
Then dropped dead on the floor.

The carriers called him "jackass"
He could tote such loads of mail—
His patrons called him "jackass"
Because of home-brewed ale.

Bill did enjoy a glass of ale
But it didn't hurt his work;
When there was duty to perform
He was never known to shirk.

It's over now, no more will Bill
Climb long hills, poorly paid,
Nor patrons say, "Your final trip
Will be going all down grade."

Just as sure as there's a Heaven
Bill took the upward flight,
Though like us all, he had his faults,
He tried to live aright.

So "judge not that ye be not judged,"
The faults of others skip,

For God alone will be your judge
When you make the final trip.

THE KING OF HORSES

"Bill" was brought to serve a postman,
He was faithful, and with mail,
Up and down the streets he'd patter
Through the rain, the snow and hail.

In and out the drives he'd hurry,
I'd never have to pull a line,
Reins thrown down around the dashboard
I could trust "Bill," he was fine!

"Bill" was mighty good to look at,
Sleek and round, and white as chalk;
Head held high and ears pricked forward
And an eye just like a hawk.

Nearly twenty years of service
"Bill" put in for "Uncle Sam";
He knew everything I wanted
And he did it like a lamb.

Then when he grew old and feeble
And to drive him would be mean,
He received a long vacation
By the spring in pastures green.

There he stayed 'till leaves turned crimson
And the nights were growing chilly,
Then he was put to sleep in clover,
'Twas the last of poor old "Billy."

If good horses go to heaven
  Bill's there, crowned upon the dome;
Other horses bowed before him,
  He is King in his new home.

BOYHOOD ON THE FARM

When I was young I liked to romp
  With other boys on Saturday,
But seldom did I get a chance,
  Nine times in ten my Ma would say,
"Now don't you go a-sneakin' off
  For we have lots of use for you;
There'll be time enough for you to play
  When you've finished work you have to do."

So I'd feed the chickens, pig and cow,
  And clean out the old stable;
Then I'd make a dash to join the gang
  If I thought that I'd be able;
Then I'd hear Mother call and say,
  "You're a fine dasher I'm glad to learn,
So put on this gingham apron
  And tackle the old churn."

I'd have to work the dasher
  For hours, it did seem,
And not a sign of butter
  Would come from that old cream.
Sometimes I'd give a mighty splash
  Just to vent my angry feeling,
And then the cream would spatter out
  And fly clear to the ceiling.

If no one saw my angry mood,
Why, I'd have naught to fear,
But if Ma happened to be 'round
I'd get one on the ear.
'Twould calm me down to steady strokes
Although I'd sulk and mutter,
Until at last I felt the weight
Of the long expected butter.

With butter churned, again I'd try
To make my get-away,
And join the boys out in the lots
A game of fox to play.
"If you need exercise," Ma'd say,
"No need to play the game of fox,
Just travel back and forth
Between the wood-shed and the box."

"I need a raging fire to-day.
Get dry wood from the rocks.
And now if you expect to eat,
Your job's to fill that box."
When I had brought my seventh load
And thought I could retire,
I saw Ma taking sticks of wood
To put into the fire.

I thought it mean to take wood out
Until the box was full;
I told Ma so and you can bet
It made me madder than a bull!
When I came in with extra sticks
To fill the box, by Jove,

I saw her putting wood into
The oven of the stove!

I used to think Ma laid awake
To plan my jobs galore,
But now she's gone I realize
She did her part—and more!
If I could have her back again
I'd consider it a joy
To do the work I tried to shirk
When I was but a boy.

AIR CASTLES

There is a place where friendly trees
Cast their cool shadows all around;
A place to rest in quiet ease,
A better place could not be found.

O what a place to spend one's life!
To make a home and settle down,
Remote from all life's noise and strife,
And yet how near it is to town!

We build a house, neat as a pin;
We furnish it with pride and care;
Ah, then it is that Death stalks in
And bursts our bubble in the air.

For life is but a passing show
Of joy and sorrow, hope and fear;
We lose or gain, but this we know;
There is no permanency here.

Then let us strive with every breath
To reach that home so bright and fair,
Where there is neither pain nor death,
Nor ever any parting there.

What thought we hear the devil say,
"You're crazy, you are not all there.
Come back to earth, you're far away,
You're building castles in the air."

Ah, they're not castles in the air!
They're mansions far beyond the sky!
And if I fail to meet you there
'Twill not be that I didn't try.

MURDER FOR MERCY

"Doc" Wright was such a manly man,
He tried with all his might
To listen when his conscience spoke
And do what he thought right.

His patients almost worshiped him,
When ill full well they knew
If there was any chance at all
Old "Doc" would pull them through.

And so with confidence Tom Hunt
Called Dr. Wright one day
To have him visit Mrs. Hunt:
She seemed to waste away.

"The Doc" got ready, took his bag,
Jumped in his motor car
And went to call on Mrs. Hunt;
The ride was cold and far.

When at last he reached the cottage
Tom met him at the door
"Oh, Doc!" he cried, "I'm glad you're here!
Min's ill; that spot is sore."

Doc Wright examined, shook his head,
And with a look of sorrow,
Said, "Tom, I cannot say to-day.
I'll call again to-morrow."

Next day as he had promised
The good old doctor came
And brought in consultation
A surgeon of world-wide fame.

After the examination,
Said the surgeon, "Yes, it's true:
Your patient has a cancer,
It has eaten through and through.

" 'Twould do no good to operate;
There's nothing we could gain;
Just keep on with the needle
To counteract the pain.

Then each day the wife grew weaker,
It seemed no use to hope:
She bore excruciating pain
Though they kept her full of "dope."

At last she cried, "Oh, doctor!
You know as well as I
That I am doomed and cannot live,
Yet you will not help me die.

"Please, doctor, give me something!
Your efforts are in vain.
Oh, Lord! How can I stand it!
My God! this pain, this pain!"

It touched the good old doctor's heart,
He cooked another "pill";
And again he used the needle,
Then all was calm and still.

The point is this: Did Dr. Wright
An act of mercy do?
It's not for me to answer that:
The question's put to you.

BOYHOOD IN SPRINGTIME

O Time, brush the mist of long years away,
Make me a boy again, just for today.
Give me some cord and a big, long-tailed kite,
Let it fly high 'till it's vanished from sight.
Give me an appetite just like a horse,
With lots of pie, cake and pudding, of course;
And when I have stuffed myself full as can be
Let me lie under the old apple tree.

Then when the sweet blossoms fall, white on the ground,
Spreading a perfume most fragrant around,

Let me hear the sweet singing, in trills of delight,
Of birds just returned after winter's long night.
O Boyhood in Springtime! when Life is awaking,
And Nature in all of her beauty is dressed;
How little we knew when thy joys we were taking
That the days of our lives in thee were the best.

OLD YEAR AND NEW

Old Year, must you reallly go
And must I say good bye?
I'm grieved to have you leave me,
It brings the tear drops to my eye.
You've been so very kind to me;
You've filled my "horn of plenty";
You've been the best year of my life!
Good bye Old 1 9 2 0.

New Year, accept my greeting,
You smiling little boy.
I ask, what wilt thou do with me,
And must I be thy toy?
Please treat me as the Old Year did,
I ask, now you've begun.
I'll not request another thing
Of 1 9 2 1.

A RAINY NIGHT ON THE FARM

Oh, it seemed so very restful
When the rain was coming down
And I was in the attic
Underneath the shingles brown,

Just to listen to the patter
  Of the rain drops overhead,
When I stretched right out and sank down in
  That good old feather-bed!

When the stock had all been "tended"
  And were in out of the wet,
And my day of honest toil was done,
  Ah, that's the time I'd get
That contented, peaceful feeling,
  When I dropped my boots like lead,
And stretched right out and sank down in
  That good old feather-bed!

When the rain came down in torrents
  Like cattle on the hoof
Racing back and forth, and up and down
  The old steep shingle roof,
I felt so very thankful
  To the good God overhead,
When I stretched right out and sank down in
  That good old feather-bed!

Then, sometimes the rain came gently
  Like a soothing lullaby,
And I felt so contented,
  I was up there warm and dry;
Then it only took a minute
  For all thoughts to leave my head,
When I stretched right out and sank down in
  That good old feather-bed!

THE BIBLE—HAVE YOU SEEN IT LATELY?

There is one Book, the best of all,
And you should strict attention give it;
The precious Word of God!—His call
To better life. Should you not live it?

The Bible is your rule and guide:
Follow its teachings and you'll never
Fall by the wayside, but with pride
In living right you'll live forever!

The Bible tells you how to live;
Your Bible read, you'll not regret it.
What's coming to you God will give
In heaven—or hell, and don't forget it!

Why wait until you have no power
And then the low-down thief resemble?
Do your share now! and at the hour
Of death you'll have no cause to tremble.

Ah, friends; perhaps you'll laugh a bit
Or sneer when you've perused this poem;
Take my advice which is, to wit:
Read all these verses till you know 'em.

A LESSON FROM A TREE

Long years ago, a small seed put
Out a young shoot, it then took root;
At first 'twas low, of little girth;
It clung for life to "Mother Earth."

Come here to-day and you will see
That shoot is now a mighty tree!

Its giant trunk is tall and straight:
God has watched over it to date;
Its bark though rough as it can be
Holds the life-blood within the tree;
Its limbs, like arms, point to the sky
In silent praise to God on high.

Oh, Thou who made the mighty tree,
Look down in pity on poor me!
Help me to strive with all my might
Like the big tree to live upright.
This trunk of mine though rough and thin
Is only rough where there is skin.

Inside, O Lord, where Thou canst see,
My heart is full of love for Thee;
Turning away from sin's dark night
And looking upward to the Light,
My praise and prayers I send above
To Thee, O Father, God of Love!

SUNDAY AND EVERYDAY

O Lord, I thank Thee for this bright, clear day.
I thank Thee, too, that I am on my way
To that old church which sits upon the hill;
So may I ever strive to do Thy will!
For where Thy chosen people get together,
May I be found, regardless of the weather.

And when the hymn is sung, O may I cling
With voice attuned to words the others sing.
What though my voice may sound just like a crow,
I'll use it, Lord, for Thou didst make it so.
And when the pastor's voice is raised in prayer,
I'll realize, O Lord, that Thou art there.

And when the preacher speaks the Word of God
Forbid that I should sit back there and nod.
As Thou, O Lord, hast given me an ear,
Help me to know when it is right to hear;
May Thy blest Word sincerely reach my heart;
That I to others may Thy Light impart.

When to the duties of the week I go,
May Thy dear Love within my heart so grow
That I will strive to do the things I've heard;
If I can't preach, then let me *live* Thy word!
Go where I may, where'er my feet may trod;
Grant I may ever walk and talk with God.

A SILENT EXHORTATION

Why look so sad and why that glistening tear,
You who have come to do me honor here?
This frame you see is but a house of clay;
All that was good in it has passed away
To praise the Lord forever and a day.

Another now may do as I have done.
Who'll fight the battle 'till the victory's won?
Who'll follow Christ, and do it without fear?
Who'll call upon Him, now while He is near?
Come, friend; decide. Are you the volunteer?

IMMORTALITY

We all must part from those we love
And sever earthly ties so dear;
Eternal life is up above;
There is no permanency here.

Yea, all must die who once had birth;
All things that are must pass away;
And so mankind returns to earth
As sure as darkness follows day.

Then what of Immortality
If all who live return to dust?
God knows and that's enough for me!
My motto is: "In God We Trust."

If we but live as we think right
'Tis quite enough for us to know,
And when we take our lonely flight
We need not worry where we go.

AN EULOGY

Friends, as you gaze upon this man
Within his narrow coffin,
He cannot hear your praises
Nor listen to you scoff him;
But there's one simple little thing
I'd have you all believe:
He never played the game of life
With the ace poked up his sleeve.

STYLES—PAST AND FUTURE

The folks who set our styles have gone
To Egypt (so I've read),
To the tomb of Tut-ankh-Ahem;
Although that king's been dead
3,000 years and more, they're bound
To excavate his tomb.
"Stand back!" they cry, and don't deny
To give our progress room.

And when they've learned the style of clothes
Those old Egyptians wore,
They'll hustle back (so I suppose)
And decorate each store
Wtih copies of those relics old
To catch the flapper's eye.
And prices? Oh, they're bound to go
A-kitin to the sky!

Be careful! you who set our styles,
And don't go back too far;
The flappers may go farther back
And give you all a jar;
They may adopt the kind of garb
That Adam's wife, Eve, wore!
And if they do—I pity you!
You'll hardly need a store.

JUST A WAVE OF THE HAND

Just a wave of the hand as you pass each day,
A friend who is going the opposite way.

You may travel fast and he do the same,
There may not be time to call out his name;
But it's such a slight effort—a wave of the hand—
And the eye is so quick, and you'll each understand,
That there's not an expression in all this broad land
That can touch the heart more than a wave of the hand.

Oh, what a meaning there is in it, too!
It doesn't mean simply "How-d'ye-do."
But it means may God bless you and keep you from harm,
And many good wishes as long as the arm
That is raised when a friend passes by.
It's so easy to do and worth while to try.

IDENTIFICATION

A woman once called at the morgue
And cried, "Oh, dear! Oh, dear!
My husband's gone: I fear he's dead,
And possibly he's here."

She examined all the corpses
And said, "I must confess
He isn't here. But if he comes
Please send to this address."

Then said the keeper of the morgue,
"Why, how can I do that?
How would I know your husband?
Is he tall, short, thin, or fat?"

Said she, "You'll recognize his corpse,
That is, if it should come:
You'll know it in a minute
For he is deaf and dumb."

THE CALL OF THE FARM

O, I want to go back
Up a little old track,
To a farmhouse I know of in Maine;
'Tis not much to see,
But it means Home to me,
And I long to be back there again.

That little old track
Which takes my mind back,
Is a path through the pasture green;
It winds up the hill
To the very door-sill
Of the dearest place ever I've seen.

I long for the call
Of the cock on the wall;
The cluck, cluck, cluck of the hen;
To milk the old cow,
To feed the old sow
And to smell the old pig-pen again.

O, I've taken a fling
At about everything
From truckman to U. S. L. C.
But I find it's no go
And I long for a hoe,
So back to the farm-life for me.

I want to return,
And O, how I yearn
To raise a long crop of "spinach"!
(I ask, does it pay—
This shaving each day?)
There's too much style here in "Grinich."

I shall go home today.
When I reach that pathway
To the old home I'll run like a flash;
So fast will I go
Where the corn and beans grow
They'll look like so much succotash.

I'll now pack my grip
To make that fast trip,
And O, but I feel a sensation!
For a thing in my dome
Says I'm going back home—
Just a thought, a mere meditation.

RAFFERTY'S REPORT

A special meeting once was called
In a town almost gone dry
To see if something could be done
About the water supply.

A committee of three was chosen;
They were told to work like Turks
To locate, if they could, a stream
For the city water-works.

At a subsequent town meeting
The moderator said,
"We'll now hear from Mr. Rafferty;
He's our committee's head."

Said Rafferty, "With Smith and Burke
I've done naught but look and look,
But the only thing that we could find
Was a stream called 'Stripling brook.'

"To describe that insignificant stream
For words I'm at a loss,
But if I stood upon one bank
I could squirt half way across."

The moderator rapped and said,
"Keep your tongue within its border!
I'll not permit such talk as that!
Rafferty, you're out of order!"

"Sure I know I'm out of order!"
Said Rafferty, "that's no dream!
If it wasn't for me cracked lip
I could squirt across the stream"!

A POSTMAN'S WISH

I wish I were the pillows
That lie upon my bed;
I wouldn't rise at five o'clock,
I'd lie and rest instead.

Oh, I could take their place all right,
Without a bit of trouble;

And as there is a pair of them,
Why, I'd be resting double!

While all the other postmen
Were walking off their fat
I'd lie, and lie and lie, and lie;
Oh, I'm real good at that!

"ALL SET" FOR THE POSTMEN'S BALL

I couldn't quite seem to "catch on"
To the dances when I was a youth,
Though I tried many times,
It's as sure as this rhymes,
My efforts, indeed, were uncouth;
My partners would stick to the end,
But I always found out they could feel
When they'd say: "I implore,
Keep your feet on the floor,
And don't grind my corn into meal."

The waltz was perplexing to me,
I was never once known to reverse;
The schottische I tried
With its hop, skip and glide;
Well, perhaps it might have been worse.
But the "trot" and "one-step" of today,
Why, they look like a real cinch, for fair!
And now that I've found
They just walk around,
Yours truly, the postman, is "there."

A RESTLESS NIGHT

My wife and I went on a trip
And stopped at "Morpheus Hall,"
But when we got up to our room
We couldn't sleep at all.

The landlord said, "Sleep well, my guests,
In this Land of Pleasant Dreams."
Said I, "From blood spots seen around
A battle-ground it seems."

The mosquitoes were there waiting--
I'll say it was no lark—
And large ones outside the window
Would "light on the trees and bark."

My wife with a big bath-towel
Both right and left was socking
And I got in as many slaps
With my long elastic stocking.

"There," said my wife, "we've got them all.
Now lie down and keep still."
But those left cost a good night's sleep
When they put in their bill.

THE FARMER WITH A HOE

I worked for a Swede named Hursteth
When I was but ten years old,
And I often left the cornfield
For a drink of water cold.

As I was on one of those trips
The old boy was a-stewing
And very soon he hopped the fence
To see what I was doing.

He caught me sprawled out in the shade
And before I'd time to go
Back to the field, he grabbed me
And whaled me with his hoe.

Now when I think of boyhood days
And of old farmer Hursteth,
I also think the Bible says,
"Ho! every one that thirsteth."

A POET'S PARADISE

They have such endearing ways
In our jails these latter days,
The convicts have a bully time for fair;
They are taught to sing and act
And, believe me, it's a fact,
This tired postman longs to linger there.

With their three square meals each day
They just while the time away,
Play ball, read books or write until they're tired;
While I, poor little fish,
If I did the things I wish
It's safe to bet I'd soon be getting fired.

In a jail somewhere out West
One chap tried his very best
At writing ads, and really wrote to suit;

He won fame and fortune, too,
And before that bird was through
He won a pardon and a bride to boot.

I've decided on a plan;
It's a dry-enforcement man,
A real rum-hound—let that be understood—
If I'm "framed" and put in jail,
Then instead of totin' mail
I'll have time to think of something really good.

THE POET (?) PONDERS

A fighter does not quit the bout
(Unless he's down and counted out)
Until he lands the lucky punch
That makes him champion of the bunch.
So I'll keep on submitting verse
(And go, perhaps, from bad to worse)
Until I strike a lucky lead,
And then, oh boy! one nice big feed!

I'd have the best to eat and drink
If I could write what I can't think.
What others think and then jot down
Will add no laurels to my crown;
I've used my head until its bare,
It's now no loafing place for hair;
I've persevered and shown much spunk
Yet what I write seems mostly bunk.

Perhaps you think most any dunce
Can write a rhyme—well, try it once;

Then send it to a magazine
And try some honest kale to glean.
By Jove! you'll get it back I think,
Unless you beat me slingin' ink.
Rhyming's a cinch for any dub,
But to sell the stuff—"Ah, there's the rub!"

THANKSGIVING DAY ON THE FARM

'Twas the day before Thanksgiving,
And I was on my way
To the old home in the country
To spend Thanksgiving Day.
I was feeling so elated,
For there is such a charm
About Thanksgiving Day when spent
'Way down East on the farm!

Alsie met me at the station;
Then began our homeward trip,
And, being in good company,
I said, "Don't use the whip."
But soon we reached the dear old home,
'Round my neck Ma put her arm,
And said, "My boy, we're glad to have you
Back here on the farm."

Then I asked for John and Harry,
And George and "Uncle Zeke":
Ma said: "They've gone a-huntin',
The law's off of deer this week."

And sure enough, a buck and doe
Will no more take alarm,
For they hung them by the hind-legs
In the wood-shed on the farm.

The folks had planned that evening
To give a country dance;
Dad said, "I'll be a boy again,
I'll show you how to prance!"
Hull's Victory, the Virginia reel
And the lancers have a charm,
Oh, there's no time like Thanksgiving
When you spend it on the farm!

At one o'clock I took my lamp
And went to that cold room;
The guests had gone and all within
Was silent as the tomb.
Oh, that old goose-feather mattress
And those blankets nice and warm!
I slept for eight straight hours
'Way down East on the farm.

Thanksgiving Day dawned clear and cold,
And, as I looked outdoors,
The men were coming from the barn,
They'd finished doing "chores";
John had a load of wood and cobs;
Dad's handkerchief—his arm!
Oh, how I laughed that morning
'Way down East on the farm!

Soon we sat down to breakfast
And there (my oath I'll take)
Was a peck of fried potatoes
And a juicy venison-steak;
There were doughnuts, coffee, cheese and PIE!
And the room was nice and warm;
Oh, there's no time like Thanksgiving
When you spend it on the farm!

At two o'clock 'twas dinner time
And Ma said, "Folks, set down:
Everything is ready
And the turkey's nice and brown."
Said "Zeke": "Them cabarets ye tell on
May have a sort o' charm,
But how about Thanksgivin', 'Bub,'
'Way down East on the farm?"

THANKSGIVING DAY AT A BOARDING HOUSE

'Twas Thanksgiving at the boarding house
Of Mrs. I. M. Close;
At such a time, in such a place,
It was a bitter dose!

When the meal was served, Jim Cutting
Proceeded to unsheath
His tongue and said, "This meal won't fill
The cav'ties of our teeth."

Then Mrs. Close admonished him;
She could "lay down the law";

Though short she may have been on food
She was "there" with her jaw.

At last, when Cutting got a chance
He snapped out quick and jerky,
"Suppose you hold your tongue a while
And let us have some turkey."

EQUANIMITY

I would end life as I would end a favorite rhyme:
Close the old book and lay aside my pipe;
And may there be no cry from me when "Father Time"
Shall say, "My friend, I think your time is ripe.

At peace with God and man; in just that frame of mind
I hope to cross the dark and silent stream;
Leaving this good old world and friends I love behind;
Knowing that Heaven is real, and not a dream.

THE OLD HOMESTEAD

(Where Putnam Drew Plans)

There is an old house by the road,
A most unsightly thing to see;
And yet, it brings back such a load
Of pleasant memories to me.

Its roof protected from the sun
All through the burning heat of day,
And when the tempest had it's fun
It turned the rain and wind away.

Now the roof sags, and when it rains
The water drips through to the floor;
Most of the windows have no panes
And by one hinge low hangs the door.

Brave General Putnam (I've been told)
Planned there and set our folks agog;
No Britisher, however bold,
Dared to venture into Caughnaughwaugh.*

Old house! I dwelt there when a boy.
It shall not tumble and decay!
I'll purchase it and then employ
Some men rebuilding right away.

I'll furnish it—my mind recalls
Those nice old things so neat and plain—
And then within those dear old walls
I'll find contentment once again.

My youth, I know, will not return;
Nor shall I like deLeon roam;
But there's one thing for which I yearn:
I long for boyhood's happy home!

*Indian name, pronounced Cog-ne-wog.

THE CARNIVAL

The Red Men's Carnival was on
And it was Saturday night;
I had money in my pocket
And was feeling "out of sight,"

So I strolled over to that spot
Where the lights were shining bright
And said, "Watch your 'Uncle Dudley,'
I'll do the things up right!

I bought some paddles on the car
But I couldn't match the wicket,
Though many times the wheel was turned
I didn't win a ticket.
Then I thought I'd try the candy;
Said I, "Give me number nine."
When he called the lucky number
The candy wasn't mine.

Smoked hams next: "Two paddles left.
Who's game?" Said I, "I am!"
Although I had a double chance
I didn't "cop" the ham.
The striped silk shirts looked good to me.
"All down, boys? Let her glide!"
But instead of winning a fancy shirt
I was skinned out of my hide.

"Oh, see the pretty blankets!
They surely do look nice,
And 'long about next Winter
They'll beat a cake of ice."
I said, "Here's my last quarter:
On number ten I'll plank it."
But when the game was over
I sneaked without a blanket.

When I reached home without a cent
Did I hear Mary yell?
I did not. But she surely had
A right to give me ——
A very severe scolding.

ALBERT JUNE, NEIGHBOR

My neighbor? Yes, for when I bought my lot
"Al" June was first to meet me on this spot;
And this is what he said: "You're going to build?
That's good. I'm glad, my wish will now be filled.

I'll tell you what, it makes a man feel good
To know he's wanted in the neighborhood!
And so I knew, from then until the end
Al June would be my neighbor and my friend.

He taught me many things I'm glad to know;
What seed to plant; how deep to make each row;
And flowers! O, he loved the flowers, too!
He knew their names, their colors, how they grew;

And all the things he told me of were right.
To talk with neighbor June was my delight.
Now that he's gone, I wonder if he's not
Head-gardener up in heaven's garden plot.

Neighbor? I'll say he was!—he didn't preach,
But by his kindly deeds he lived to teach!
If I reach heaven, O, I hope to see
Al June, in my new home to welcome me!

AN APOLOGY

(To the owner of "Patsy")

Your postman, whistling like a quail,
Came bringing you the morning mail,
When "Man's best friend," who watched his chance,
Sprang out and grabbed him by the pants.

Oh, my! the postman went hog-wild!
His language wasn't very mild,
And so he fell in disrepute
By saying things which didn't suit.

Your postman simply lost his head.
For all the things he did and said.
He's sorry, yes, he is, that's true;
Here's his apology to you.

Dog—"man's best friend" the saying goes—
But ask your postman—Oh, he knows!
Is he "friend" or foe? Come, tell me which.
Yours very truly, Manly Ritch.

MY GARDEN

The spring is here, the glad, bright spring,
When poets write for all they're worth;
My mind is on another thing;
I love to dig in "Mother Earth."

My spading-fork and garden rake
Assist to carry out my plans;
And when I start no gloves I take,
I love to feel dirt with my hands.

Sometimes I see my good old pal
Crossing the gardens—work then stops—
For oh, I love to talk with "Al."
He knows just what is best for crops.

I may not raise a thing—that's true—
For life is an uncertain game:
Perhaps I'll die before I'm through,
But I'll keep planting just the same,

Until my toil of life is o'er.
Let others reap from seed I sow;
Have I but done my best, what more
Can mortal man do here below.

My garden plot is my delight.
O, "Mother Earth," thou hath thy charms!
When kind friends plant me out of sight
Then take me in thy gentle arms.

TO REV. OLIVER HUCKEL, D.D.

(On his sermon: "The Evils of Gambling")

Good work! you did your duty no denying;
Although the world may scoff 'tis satisfying
To know you did the thing you thought was right,
And when no one stood by you in the fight.

I don't amount to much, I'm not a crowd,
But what I say I speak it right out loud!
Oh, there's been too much gambling, and because
It is for Charity we break the laws!

Folks gambled long before Christ came, 'tis said,
And others will, no doubt, when we are dead,
But yet, it isn't your fault if they do.
You did your best. Our hats come off to you!

Although the thing hoped for be not attained,
"A duty well performed is honor gained."
God does not ask too much of any man;
'Tis well if we but do the best we can.

EASTER IN SPRINGTIME

How nice it is that Easter comes to give
Us hope beyond the grave that we shall live
The life immortal, meet again and see
The Son of God who died on Calvary.
All Nature now new life is putting forth;
The birds we love to hear are coming North.
Easter in Springtime! that's enough for me:
Is it not hope of immortality?

LABORING ON THE TEMPLE

(Verses placed in Corner-stone of Masonic Temple)

At last! our Corner-stone is laid,
Which indicates some progress made;
Before another year rolls 'round,
Here on this spot may there be found
A Temple, worthy of the name.
(Too long we've hung our heads in shame.)

Let every Brother do his share,
Then when we view our Temple fair
Or welcome visitors who come,
We may be proud of our new home.
May we each feel as we shall sit
In our new Lodge: "I did my bit."

We're thankful—and I'm glad to state,
We may ourselves congratulate.
Who of us all deserves most praise?
To that one man my hat I raise:
He (it may very well be said)
Was not afraid to go ahead—
Our Worshipful Master.

THE BEST ROOM IN THE HOUSE

Dare and his wife both like nice things
And Dare (an awful "souse"),
Insists that they must sleep in
The best room in the house.

However, friends can never say
They're "meaner than a louse,"
For when they come Dares put them in
The best room in the house.

One night while Dare was at his club,
His wife's friend, Nellie Fair,
Surprised her with a visit;
They left a note for Dare.

When he came in 'twas very late;
He knew he'd not done right,

So softly he sneaked up the stairs
  Without the aid of light.

Then he undressed and crawled in bed
  As quiet as a mouse,
And found that Nellie occupied
  The best room in the house.

SORE FEET

Julius Caesar! how my feet hurt!
  Every step along the way.
Have you ever felt those twinges
  When you had to walk all day?

"Keep a-smilin'," says a placard
  In the window of a store.
Gee! I'll bet the guy that wrote it
  Can't smile when his feet are sore!

What's the time? Behind my schedule!
  And here I'm makin' up a rhyme!
Though my feet are sore as blazes
  I've just got to make up time.

So I have to keep a-movin'
  'Till at last I end the day;
Then a change—I seek real pleasure
  Down at "Frenchie's" cabaret.

Music, dancing and refreshments!
  Yes, and all the Janes are there;
So I check my cap and ulster,
  Walk right in and take a chair.

But my dancing partner, Gladys,
  Eager to be on the floor,
Says, "Come, dance," and then I answer:
  "Dance? Like—well, my feet are sore!

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

To L. W. L.

It doesn't seem, and I'll not say,
That you are older by one day
Than when in nineteen hundred five
Here in this house on Glenwood Drive
You wished a long and happy life
For me, about to take a wife.
Some things I never shall forget,
And that is one of them, you bet!

But trouble came to make me sad;
It took the very best I had;
'Twas then you met me on life's road
And helped to share my heavy load.
When one is brought to such an end,
Ah, then he really knows his friend!
I wish in all sincerity
That you, my friend, will outlive me.

Now do not fail to comprehend
My meaning, for I would not end
This life of mine: I hope to be
Your postman 'till *I'm* eighty-three.
And then I hope, if all goes well,
I'll have a chance to fish a spell,

And when I catch enough for two
I'll always come and share with you.

DAD'S TRIP WITH SANTA CLAUS

Now children, keep quiet
  And listen—because,
I'll tell of my ride
  With old Santa Claus.

'Twas the night before Christmas;
  I was tucked in my bed
And in a sound sleep
  When old Santa Claus said,

"Come with me in your dreams,
  You must help me tonight
If I finish my work
  Before it's daylight."

I said, "I'm your man
  And I'm right on the docket!"
Then up through the chimney
  I shot like a rocket.

And there on the roof
  To my eyes did appear
The aeroplane
  Santa uses each year.

He said, "You fly the plane
  And I'll hand out the toys,
For I know the homes
  Of the good girls and boys."

So I took the wheel
And was cutting things loose,
With old Santa Clause shouting,
"Come, feed her the juice!"

I knew I could trust him
And so, without fear,
We flew to the chimneys
He called at each year.

We stopped long enough
At the good girls and boys
To fill up their stockings
With candies and toys.

When we'd called on them all
Old Santa Claus said,
"We'll now visit the bad kids
While they're yet in bed.

"When they wake in the morning,
Oh, won't it be great!
When they see what I've done
Their hair will stand straight"!

"They'll fly from the room
In a terrible fright,
For I'll leave each a lion
That can roar, scratch and bite."

Then he grabbed up a lion
And, my! such a roaring!
I woke with a start;
'Twas just mother snoring.

You see I'd been dreaming;
  But you'd better take warning,
If you don't want a lion
  In your sock Christmas morning.

HOW, WHY AND WHEN

It often has been asked of me
How I came to write (bum) poetry,
And why I didn't start to score
'Till I'd reached the age of forty-four.
Now I always had an appetite
For things in price quite out of sight,
So until paper got real high,
To write I didn't even try.

Now when a nice pad I behold
That's worth almost its weight in gold
With pen I scratched, its leaves I pull,
To me it's like red to a bull.

I've told you why and this is how
I write such as you're reading now.
My clock I set for three and then,
Roused from my sleep, I grab my pen
And strictly to my work I keep
And do the trick while you're asleep.

I choose this quiet morning hour,
The stillness gives my pen more power;
If I my mission would fulfill
All things for me must be kept still.

A book, "The Inside of the Cup,"
Once I had to shut that up.

I've told you how, and why and when
I exercise my fountain pen.
Now if you've found some rhymes are good,
I'll write some more—just as I should—
But if you don't believe this yarn,
Then I don't care a tinker's darn!

WHEN DAD GOES TO WORK

When dad leaves the house in the morning
  Does he go away with a smile?
And then how about this:
Do you give him a kiss
  That makes his day's work seem worth while?
Or have you grown cold and indifferent,
  And just let him go on his way?
There are dangers that lurk
Around all kinds of work.
  Who knows?—This may be his last day!

But sometimes the fault is with daddy:
  He gulps his food down on the fly;
You have seen him, no doubt,
Grab his hat and rush out
  Without even saying good-by.
There's something that's worth more than riches,
  (And life is too short to grow cold;)
So get this through your dome:
It's the folks in your home!
  They're worth more than millions in gold!

THE POSTMAN'S CHRISTMAS

One Christmas, when the postman called
At a mansion old and gray,
The butler came to take the mail,
And said, "Postman, don't go 'way.
The madam wants to see you.
She's on the upper floor.
I'll just run up and call her.
Come in and shut the door."

Soon she came tripping down the stairs
With a "green-back" in her hand.
To the sad-eyed, weary postman
It certainly looked grand.
And as he reached out to take it,
She, looking the queen of vamps,
Said, "Merry Christmas, postman!
Please bring some two-cent stamps.

THE MOUNTAIN STREAM

Oh, what can compare with a mountain stream
On a pleasant day in June!
And a slanting rock on which to dream
And see the ripples like diamonds gleam
As they sing a pleasant tune.

Dancing along on its rocky way
And laughing at the sun,
It kisses the lips of the banks so gay
With foliage, but it cannot stay,
Yet, its course is never run.

Always the smiling, happy stream,
To greet me when I come;
O mountain brook, thou art the cream
Of Nature's beauty! it doth seem
That here should be my home.

Far away from the busy market place
And here by the old mill pool,
I would build me a house and hide my face
From men, and maids in paint and lace,
And learn from Nature's school.

Oh, leaping waters of the stream,
No rest you seem to take;
Till at your mouth I catch a gleam
Of something rising up like steam:
You soul-kiss with the lake!

Then on through pipes deep under ground
Until at last you burst
Forth from a faucet turned around,
A sterner duty thou hast found:
To quench a city's thirst.

O laughing waters of the stream,
This lesson thou hast taught:
It is not Life to lie and dream,
But work—and smiling cast a gleam
On worthy actions wrought.

THANKSGIVING

When the days were growing shorter
And the air was crisp and cold;
When the harvest had been gathered—
Just all the bins could hold—
I have seen the "boss" I worked for
Walk in and take his place
At a table loaded down with food
Without a word of grace.

But in a cottage by the road—
The house where I was born—
The harvest stowed away was from
"The small end of the horn";
We had no nice fat turkey,
Nor did we dress in silk,
But I've heard dear old dad give thanks
For a bowl of "mush an' milk."

Now friend, when comes Thanksgiving Day,
Wherever you may be,
Thank God for what He sends you
If it's only bread and tea.
Oh, you'll feel a whole lot better,
For it's wrong, I must confess,
To live beyond our means and whine
For things we don't possess.

RECIPROCITY

Who put the Sun in Sunday
For us men who wear the gray?
Who asks for living wages,
And a Saturday half-day?
Who wants no work on Christmas?
I think you know, my mates:
It's the good "Lord's Day Alliance
Of the United States."

"One day of rest in seven"
Is their slogan, and because
They've always been right on the job
It is written in our laws
That, we shall have our Sundays,
To rest, and go to church.
Now, when they need assistance,
Shall we leave them in the lurch?

Of course we all feel grateful,
And we're there with the applause
When Dr. Bowlby tells us
He's with us in our cause;
But "money makes the mare go,"
And as we've all had a lift
Then, let us all reciprocate
With just a little gift.

For every dollar we have sent
They have spent two dollars more,
And used it very wisely, too,
On things which we hoped for;

They got results, and so, it seems,
The least that we could give
Is a dollar each, to help their cause,
Every year that we shall live.

PLAIN LIVIN'

A poet once upon a time
Praised sweet corn highly in his rhyme,
And if my memory's not at fault
With these two lines he called a halt:
"It's food and drink, it's meat and milk,
And that is why it's dressed in silk."

Corn "dressed in silk," it sounds all right;
And yet, the thought gives me a fright!
For if I want to pace the floor
With pains that fairly make me roar,
(This is as true as you were born)
Just let me eat one ear of corn.

Sweet corn may suit your appetite
And not keep you awake at night,
But as for me, well, let me say,
I'll have corn served a different way:
Just strip the fodder of its silk
And give me plain old "mush an' milk."

THE BALD HEAD CLUB OF AMERICA

We must admit there's nothing quite so fair
As lovely woman with a wealth of hair;
But when it comes to man—"Ah, there's the rub!"
Too much hair bars him from The Bald-Head Club.

We've heard men boast of having "loads of hair";
It may look good; that's neither here nor there;
Let men with "loads of hair" boast if they choose,
But give us each a head that we can use.

Let me quote this (I'll make it "short and sweet"):
"Grass cannot grow upon a busy street,"
So when you see a head bare to the skin
Then, rest assured, that head's not bald within.

You hairy men, oh, we do not forget,
You may be very wise indeed, and yet,
How many in asylums, having hair,
Have looked around and found no bald-heads there.

If you have "loads of hair" don't take a rope
And hang yourself, for while there's life there's hope;
If you're bald-headed now, don't be a dub,
Take off your hat! Salute!—and join Our Club.

ALARMING THE NEIGHBORHOOD

There's a little old Ford
  Standing under our shed,
And just before daybreak
  I spring from my bed;
It's then darker than pitch,
  Yet I needn't be seen—
Neighbors all know me now
  By my thrashing machine.

I am sorry, indeed,
  That the noise of my bus

Awakens my neighbors
Who (I'm told) sometimes cuss;
But if they had my job
The noise would sound good
When things start to hum
Under old Lizzie's hood.

When it's six in the morning
And seven below,
It's no fun to be cranking
A car that won't go
Till I've used up my starter
And cranked till I'm sore;
Then it's music to me
When my bus starts to roar!

If your neighbor is poor,
And must start out each morn
In a car that's so noisy
You can't hear its horn,
And your rest is disturbed
For a moment or two,
Thank your stars he's out there
In the cold, and not you.

I'D LIKE TO IMITATE A BIRD

I hear grand concerts summer days
While I am on my route:
The birds sing merrily their lays—
Even the catbirds and bluejays
All blend their notes to suit.

But now those litle feathered friends
Have Southward taken flight—
Except a bluejay who now sends
His loud, shrill cry o'er hills and glens,
And a crow as black as night.

If they can stand each wintry blast
And live to tell the tale,
I, too, shall stick until the last
Cold day of Winter shall have passed,
And carry out the mail.

My postman's whistle may not sound
The sweet note of a bird,
But oft'times on a single round
It has brought cheer to souls who found
New hope by what occurred.

I have brought messages of joy
To cheer a mother's heart:
A letter from an absent boy;
I am a link which they employ
While they must live apart.

And sometimes—painful to relate—
I bring sad tales of woe.
Such letters ought to come by freight;
Good news should fly, the bad could wait;
I'd like to make it so.

When I approach a domicile
And blow a loud, clear note,
Oh, I would like to see folks smile;

But if I know they grieve the while,
A lump comes in my throat.

I'd like to imitate a bird
And bring you naught but joys;
But if of grief I bring you word
With that familiar sound you've heard,
My heart is in the noise.

AN AMATEUR'S FISH STORY

Never before have I had my wish,
To spend a whole week catching fish;
But here am I with my willow creel
Strapped to my back, and my rod and reel,
Wading the mountain stream again,
Far away from the haunts of busy men.

With Sargent, who knows all about
The habits of the gamy trout,
I can fish all day, or if I choose
To write a poem or "snap" some views
Out here where the whispering pine-trees grow
And the waters rush to the rocks below,

It is mine to enjoy! I am here to rest
And do only the things that I like the best.
If I never catch another fish
I'm satisfied, for I've had my wish:
I've hooked three trout—though they got away,
I am happy as a king to-day.

Though I may catch no fish to fry,
This stream, these rocks, the trees and sky
All have a charm that suits me well;
Then, too, I have this "yarn" to tell:
The fish that got away were whales!
Each weighed three pounds—I saw their scales.

ORDER OF THE EASTERN STAR

Dear Chapter, Order of the Eastern Star,
Those who know not may wonder what you are;
But as for me, I've taken my degrees,
And know how hard my Sisters strive to please.

I've been brought low and know whereof I speak,
I have kept silent when my soul would shriek,
I've been afflicted, and have kissed the rod;
I who now speak was once struck dumb by God.

It is not only in our Chapter room
That our fair Sisters like the lilies bloom;
But in the hospital and stricken home—
How good it is to see a Sister come!

Just a few flowers or, perhaps, a book;
A cheerful word or two, a kindly look;
Sickness and death and grief we all must bear,
And when it comes it's good to know you care.

Sisters and Brothers of the Eastern Star,
Your kindly acts are proof of what you are.
For all your deeds of kindness to each other
May I be worthy to be called your Brother.

A POET'S VACATION

Down by the brook in the pasture I'm resting,
Where birds come to bathe at the edge of the stream;
In the green boughs above me the robins are nesting,
And high overhead I can hear a hawk scream.

Now down through the meadow where daisies are growing
I stroll toward the farmhouse that lies in the dell;
I quicken my pace, for the dinner-horn's blowing—
I'll admit it's a sound that I've learned to like well.

An old-fashioned dinner I know is before me,
And I have the keen appetite of a boy;
But on reaching "The Homestead" the boarders implore me:
"Recite a few poems." But I'm resting—O joy!

No long recitations, for this is my caper:
I am here for a rest and to have a good time.
What's that on the table? A pencil and paper!
Now I'm ready for business—how much for my rhyme?

THE WINNER

It happened more than thirty years ago
That, through the fields and woods knee-deep with snow,
Four boys were racing to the schoolhouse yard,
And he who won that race was Garfield Chard.

One summer's day we had another race,
Down to "the swimmin' hole"; "Guff" set the pace,
Stripping his clothes off as he ran, and won—
He was undressed before we had begun.

Years passed, and oft' I've met "Guff" on the road,
Driving "the chemical"; I, with my load
Of parcel post, held up while he rushed by.
"Again you've passed me, my old pal," thought I.

An accident! and now folks say he's dead.
No such a thought can dwell within my head.
'Twas just a race to that land bright and fair,
And 'tis not strange that "Guff" should beat me there.

Swift was the boy, but swifter still the man;
Keenly alert was he, and rather than
Kill someone else, his precious life he gave,
Yet, I believe, he lives beyond the grave.

There is a heav'n above and I declare,
The wrongs done here will be made right up there.
That man who for a woman gave his life
Hath won a crown of glory in the strife.

THE DESERTED HOMESTEAD

Half-hidden by an overgrowth there stands
  Beside a narrow, crooked country lane,
A house with massive timbers hewn by hands
  Which laboured hard, but shall not toil again.

How many families in the years gone by
  Hast thou, old homestead, sheltered from the rain.
Now thou doth stand a relic warped and dry,
  Without a porch, a door, or window pane.

An old deserted homestead half-decayed,
In solitude I find thee hid away;
Where once the happy carefree children played
There is a melancholy scene to-day.

But yet, one thing of beauty stands alone:
An old wistaria vine climbs over all;
Its gorgeous blossoms, in a way, atone
For the old porch which Time hath made to fall.

Within, old house, are relics of the past:
A corded bedstead (which doth make me yawn);
A picture and a book! thank God, they last!
Our thoughts remain years after we are gone.

A picture and a book—why who could think
Of moving out and leaving them behind!
Artist and Poet, such good paint and ink
Shall not be wasted while I have a mind.

Left here alone to tumble and decay
By those whom thou hast sheltered from the rain,
Deserted homestead, thou hast giv'n to-day
Joy to a soul who may not call again.